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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Information Radio-Television Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2427

Sept. 8, 1989



SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE CLAYTON YEUTTER and USDA Radio-TV Chief Vic Powell (left) get ready for a live video conference held Aug. 31 with TV farm broadcasters. Before leaving for a round of discussions Sept. 6 - 9 in Europe, Yeutter held a second video conference with TV broadcasters Sept. 1. Both conferences, transmitted live via satellite, were monitored by radio and TV broadcasters across the nation and also by print reporters in Washington, D.C. (USDA Photo by Bob Nichols.)

REDEFINING FARM POPULATION -- Depending on how it's defined, the U.S. farm population is 11 million -- or less than 6 million. Why such a difference? The answer lies in whether the count includes all people living in households associated with farming by residence, occupation, or income, or just those actually living on farms. The first group, incidentally, is the largest by far. Contact: Margaret Butler (202) 786-1534.

MUSSMAN NAMED TO S&E POST -- Sec. Yeutter has named Harry C. Mussman, a veterinarian and microbiologist who has held several posts at USDA, as deputy assistant secretary of agriculture for science and education. Mussman, 59, is a native of Sheboygan, Wis. He was administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service from 1980 to 1983. Since 1986, he has been director of the animal health and plant protection program of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture located in San Jose, Costa Rica. Mussman managed his family beef cattle ranching operation in Kansas while holding a variety of teaching positions at Kansas State University.

NEW PIG DISEASE -- USDA scientists in Ames, Iowa, have found bratislava -- a type of Leptospirosis that causes reproductive problems in swine -- for the first time in the U.S. The disease is called bratislava because it was first isolated in 1953 from a hedgehog in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia. The disease can infect humans who come in contact with infected hogs. Contact: Carole A. Bolin (515) 239-8325.

GENES FOUND TO RIPEN PRODUCE -- Two USDA scientists say they have isolated a gene that plays a key role in the ripening of fruits and vegetables, according to a recent Wall Street Journal. The advance may lead to new ways to reduce fruit and vegetable spoilage and thus get fresher produce to consumers. Contact: Athanasiou Theologis or Takahide Sato (415) 559-5911.

INFO ON CONSERVATION -- USDA's Soil Conservation Service has a new booklet out that's designed to help news media find good conservation news sources. It has names and phone numbers and it's called: "Where to get Information about Soil and Water Conservation." Want a copy? Call Marci Hilt (202) 447-6445.

SANFORD MILLER, a national spokesman for food safety issues, will present USDA's 1989 Sterling B. Hendricks Memorial Lecture Sept. 11 at the fall national meeting of the American Chemical Society in Miami, Fla. Miller, who was director of FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition from 1978 to 1987, will speak on the nation's quest for safe food. Miller is currently a dean at the University of Texas Health Science Center, San Antonio, Texas. Contact: Sanford Miller (512) 567-3709.

DON'T FORGET FARM SAFETY week, Sept. 17 - 23. This year's theme is "SAFEing the Farm & Ranch." Agriculture still continues to have one of the highest work death rates of all major industries, even with a decline from 1987. Please urge the farming families in your area to make safety and health a continuing priority in their operations. Contact: Jack Burke (312) 527-4800.

OHIO FARM SCIENCE REVIEW -- Ohio will hold its 27th annual Farm Science Review Sept. 19 - 21 at the Molly Caren Agricultural Center near London, Ohio. Contact: James Fowler (614) 292-2011.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1683 -- A new report says rural areas are being threatened by a combination of serious economic and environmental problems. On the flip side, rural areas are also being threatened by loss of people, businesses, job opportunities and political clout as well. On this edition of AGRICULTURE USA, Gary Crawford talks to several experts about the future of rural America. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 min. documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1165 -- School lunch controversy; animal welfare regulations; wheat by-products; gypsy moth research; growing mushrooms. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 - 3 min. consumer features.)

AGRITAPE #1672 -- USDA News Highlights: Drought aid update; rural areas as dumping grounds; wheat by-products; more on ground water contamination. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1236 -- Developing new floral crops; puny pasture predators; neutralizing aflatoxin interactions; sorghum -- dry land survivor. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Wed., Sept. 20, catfish report, ag outlook report; Thurs., Sept. 21, ag resources outlook; Fri., Sept. 22, livestock & poultry production reports; Tues., Sept. 25, weekly weather & crop outlook, world ag outlook.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.
Material changed at 5 p.m. EDT each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

USDA TV NEWS SERVICE -- (Sept. 7, 9 & 11) Dale Schwindaman of USDA's Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service on animal welfare regulations; USDA Economist James Miller on dairy outlook; USDA Economist Scott Sanford on cotton & wool; USDA Chief Meteorologist Norton Strommen on weather & crop update; Assistant Sec. Charles Hess on LISA; USDA Economist Shannon Hamm on vegetable imports; USDA Economist Ed Allen on wheat prices; excerpts from press conference on EXTOXNET, a study of the 100 most-used pesticides.

FEATURES: Lynn Wyvill reports on fuel efficient breast-fed babies.

NEXT WEEK: AG UPDATE (Sept. 14, 16 & 18) -- Eric Parsons talks with William Penn about provisions of the 1989 crop disaster program; Kathleen Katras reports on the latest CCC interest rate.

Available on satellite Westar IV, audio 6.2 or 6.8:

THURSDAY 7:30-7:45 p.m., EDT, Transponder 12D
SATURDAY 10:30-11:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 10D
MONDAY 8:30-9:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 12D
(Repeat of Saturday transmission)

OFF MIKE

WHAT ... can bring American networks, the BBC, TASS and 400 media people to town? Try a cattle drive with 300 covered wagons, 3,000 riders and 2,700 head of cattle. Add a longhorn auction, big-name entertainers at the fairgrounds, and a snowstorm for suspense and you have the makings of a major story, says Rick Haines (Northern Ag Network, Billings, Mont.). But, agricultural news continues despite the hoopla. Rick reports that higher feeder cattle prices, plenty of grass and a good wheat crop translates into a pretty good year. BIG ... outbreak of boll weevils in southeast Missouri is boosting costs to a point that most producers will be lucky to break even says Jeff Wheeler (KBOA/KTMO, Kennett, Mo.). Mild winters for the past three years have allowed insect populations to survive. Says that August was very dry, but rains late in the month have helped cotton and beans.

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Radio and Television, Rm. 410-A
Office of Information, OGPA
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250-1300

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BLACKBIRD ... invasion is underway on the sunflower crop, says Dean Thurow (KCJB, Minot, N.D.). Nearby conservation and wildlife refuge lands provide shelter for the birds. The drought heavily stressed sunflower and corn crops, but generous rains have helped. Problem now is getting dry wheat into storage. Thurow says wheat yields are down but quality is higher than last year in terms of color and protein content. LISTENERS ... are interested in their diets. Oat bran cereal sales are up 215 percent. Water-soluble dietary fiber, such as that in oat bran and oat meal, lowers blood cholesterol and helps regulate blood glucose levels. Other excellent sources include beans, peas, figs, dates, prunes, apples, barley and rice bran. Experts say humans need about 35 grams of total dietary fiber daily; about one-third should be water soluble. An apple a day is healthy advice.

Vic Powell

VIC POWELL
Chief, Radio & TV Division